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Navy worker accused of passing photos

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WASHINGTON — Samuel Loring Morison, a civilian intelligence analyst for the U.S. Navy and grandson of America's foremost historian of the sea, was arrested by the FBI and charged yesterday with passing classified U.S. satellite photos to a British defense publication with which he was seeking employment.

Mr. Morison, of Crofton, is an expert on Soviet amphibious ships at the Naval Intelligence Support Center in Suitland. He was accused of passing three photos of a Soviet aircraft carrier under construction on the Black Sea to *Jane's Defense Weekly*.

One of the pictures also appeared in a number of U.S. publications, including the August 8 *Baltimore Sun*, which attributed it to the London-based weekly via the Associated Press.

The FBI arrested Mr. Morison, 40, Monday night at Dulles International Airport. He was brought before a U.S. magistrate in Alexandria, Va., yesterday morning, where he declined to waive the formality of removal by federal authorities to Maryland. He was being held on \$500,000 bail pending an October 11 hearing on removal, a much less demanding action than extradition.

The investigation that resulted in Mr. Morison's arrest was first prompted by the U.S. publication of one of the pictures.

After it was determined that three photographs similar to those in the weekly were missing from a desktop in the Surface Ship Systems Department of the NISC, the FBI became involved along with the Naval Investigative Service.

U.S. security concerns about the photographs centered on what the Soviet Union might learn about U.S. satellite intelligence gathering strengths and weaknesses from close examination of the photos.

As portrayed in a government affidavit made public yesterday, the investigation from that point pro-

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ceeded with the sure-footedness and technical razzle-dazzle of a television mystery script.

U.S. authorities first enlisted the aid of Vice Adm. Sir Roy Halliday, head of intelligence for the British ministry of defense. Sir Roy secured the photographs from *Jane's* and handed them over to the NIS in London.

The photographs were sent back to Washington where an FBI finger-print man "positively identified a latent fingerprint which appeared on the glossy side of one of the photographs as that of Samuel Loring Morison, based on a comparison with known fingerprints of Morison," the affidavit read.

With that backing them up, an FBI agent, Jerald C. Wal, and an NIS agent, David W. Swindle, went to Suitland and seized the ribbon from the government typewriter Mr. Morison used and sent it to the lab at FBI headquarters here.

Technicians there used the key strikes on the ribbon to reconstruct the correspondence that had been typed with it.

In one letter, according to the affidavit, Mr. Morison wrote to the editor-in-chief of the weekly, Derek Wood, thanking him for remuneration for "items" and adding that he had not expected anything. The letter also said that there could not be a "shipment" every week. "In the letter, Morison states he would be pushing his luck if he did that," the affidavit read. The "items" and "shipment" were not further identified.

That letter, according to the government, concluded with a request for employment by the weekly, saying: "You can have me at the drop of a hat and you won't regret it."

While he was seeking full-time employment at the weekly publication, Mr. Morison was already employed part-time by a sister publication, the annual *Jane's Fighting Ships*, the joint FBI-NIS affidavit said. He received about \$5,000 a year as editor of the U.S. section of the ships annual, according to the affidavit. The *Jane's* publications are considered to be among the most authoritative civilian treatments of military matters.

In another letter quoted by the affidavit, Mr. Morison wrote to the

editor of the annual, saying: "You know my loyalty to *Jane's* is above question. I'd rather quit here than there." In the same letter, Mr. Morison was quoted as referring to the Suitland Navy facility as a "pit."

Mr. Morison is the grandson of the late Samuel Eliot Morison, who won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1942 for his work on *Christopher Columbus*, "Admiral of The Ocean Sea," and again in 1960 for his biography of John Paul Jones. He was also the author of a 15-volume history of U.S. naval operations in World War II, and of the "Oxford History of the American People." The late Mr. Morison rose to the rank of rear admiral in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He died in 1976.

The younger Mr. Morison was charged under the U.S. espionage statute although the information he is alleged to have passed on was intended not for the secret use of a foreign government but for open publication.

It was the same law used to prosecute Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, who copied and released the Pentagon Papers, the secret history of the Vietnam war prepared at the behest of the Defense Department. Since Dr. Ellsberg, too, intended the material for publication and did not give it directly to a foreign power, critics claimed the government was creating a new crime not envisioned by the law.

That claim was never tested because the charges were dismissed after discovery of gross government improprieties in the case, including a government break-in at the office of Dr. Ellsberg's former psychiatrist in search of material for a psychological profile of the accused.

Mr. Morison had worked at the NIS since 1974 and had the highest security clearance for a government employee, said Lt. Maxwell Allen, Navy information officer. Mr. Morison earned about \$30,000 a year.

Mr. Morison, who lives in a two-bedroom apartment at North Forest Court in Crofton, kept to himself for the most part and did not socialize much with other neighbors, one resident of the building said.

Sun reporter Sheridan Lyons also contributed to this article.